

Media Release

Rob Stokes needs to listen to his Federal colleagues on school funding

NSW Education Minister Rob Stokes should consult his Federal colleagues to understand why the funding model for non-government schools needed to be overhauled, Catholic Schools NSW (CSNSW) said today.

“The Member for Bradfield, Paul Fletcher, was right when he said the new funding arrangements were necessary to deliver funding certainty and a more targeted, needs-based approach to local, low-fee non-government schools,” CSNSW Chief Executive Officer Dallas McInerney said.

This week, Mr Fletcher said the Morrison Government would transition to a fairer model for determining how non-government schools were funded as part of its response to the National School Resourcing Board’s Review of the socio-economic status (SES) score methodology.

Mr Fletcher said he had been working alongside the Catholic Schools Office in the Diocese of Broken Bay and local independent schools to ensure “...that schools that need the most support will get the most support”.

Mr McInerney urged Mr Stokes to support the Federal Government’s new funding arrangements which are required to correct a flaw in the current SES-based model that assesses parents’ ability to pay school fees based on the area they live in, rather than their actual income.

“By having a more accurate measure of parents’ capacity to pay, all non-government schools will receive the correct funding support they need to remain affordable.

“The Commonwealth is the major funder of low-fee non-government schools, but constitutionally needs the agreement of the State Government before its funding can reach non-government schools in NSW,” he said.

“We call on Mr Stokes to stop using Catholic and other low-fee schools as hostages while he attempts to extract a special deal for government schools which are already funded by taxpayers – unlike non-government schools which must rely on parents’ fees to make up a substantial gap in their funding.

“While we support a strong and properly funded government schools sector, the Commonwealth will always be a minority funder of state schools.

“It is unfair of Mr Stokes to jeopardise the Commonwealth funds that have been committed to non-government schools in the hope he may win some additional Federal funds for government schools, which are primarily the funding responsibility of the NSW Government.”

Catholic Schools NSW represents the state’s 595 Catholic schools and their 255,000 students.

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